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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAMA 000774

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR PM/SNA, L/PM, AND NEA/ARP
CAIRO FOR STEVE BONDY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/22/2029

TAGS: [PREL](#) [BA](#) [KICC](#)

SUBJECT: LAWYERS STILL STUDYING ARTICLE 98 OPTIONS

REF: MANAMA 677

Classified By: Ambassador Ronald E. Neumann for reasons 1.5(b)d).

1.(C) Then Charge Robert Ford used his final calls to push Article 98, but Bahraini lawyers are still studying entry into force options, Foreign Minister Shaikh Muhammad bin Mubarak Al-Khalifa told Charge on May 15. Charge delivered copies of the entry into force notes from Tunisia, Morocco, and India faxed to us by T staff and advised that the word "ratification" need not appear in the notes exchanged. He also made clear that the U.S. would not be willing to accept a time limitation of the agreement.

2.(C) COMMENT: A Bahraini lawyer central to the internal GOB debate is currently in Washington handling the legal aspects of the Free Trade Agreement negotiation. We expect him to return in early June. Meanwhile, the Ambassador has further opportunities on his schedule of farewell calls to press for bringing this agreement into force. END COMMENT.
NEUMANN